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1. Border Troops in the USSR used a good many dogs to perform various duties.
2. Regardless of the purpose for which a dog was to be used, only one breed of dog was employed in Border Troop units throughout the USSR, namely, the German Schaefer Hund (Nemetskaya ovcharka). Border Troop canine breeding and training centers were organized at every border detachment and sometimes at border district headquarters.
3. All dogs used in the border troops were referred to as service dogs (Sluzhebnaya sobaka) and were broken down into three basic groups:
 - a. Trailing Dogs (Rozysknaya sobaka)
 - b. Duty Dogs (Storozhevaya sobaka)
 - c. Watch Dogs (Karaul'naya sobaka)

Lately there had been within the border troops a noticeable tendency to merge duty and watch dog functions and to organize instead one general group of line dogs (Stroyevyye sobaki).

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4. The trailing dogs were the best ones; they were the most intelligent and were given advanced training. They were quite expensive; the government price for an average trailing dog was 1,500-2,000 rubles. Each trailing dog had his own full-time instructor. Training of a trailing dog usually started at six months of age and lasted for one year. To be qualified as a trailing dog, after having completed training, the dog had to meet the following requirements:
- a. To detect and follow traces at least three or four hours old.
 - b. To follow traces regardless of the configuration of the terrain or character of the soil.
 - c. To follow traces for a distance of at least 12-15 km.
 - d. To follow zigzag traces involving at least five or six sharp turns.
 - e. To be able to pick up personal items of the trailed person which had been discarded or hidden during the flight.
 - f. To be able to guard an arrested person and to attack him at the first movement.
 - g. To possess all features of a vicious and, at the same time, courageous dog.
 - h. To be able to suppress barking.
 - i. To be able to remain watchful on duty for 12-15 hrs. or as long as the duty lasted, regardless of whether it was day or night.
 - j. Not to let anyone other than its instructor come close and not take food from anyone other than its instructor.
 - k. To follow and obey all commands of its instructor for which it was trained.

Outstanding trailing dogs in the border troops were able to follow traces for as far as 30 km. and to discover traces 12 hours old.

Very good trailing dogs could follow for a distance of 20 km. and pick up traces eight hours old.

The good ones would follow traces 12-15 km. and pick them up 3 to 4 hours after they were made.

- 5. A duty dog had to be able to discover traces at least 1½-2 hours old, to remain watchful on duty, not to bark, and to be both vicious and brave. (It must not be afraid of shooting).
- 6. A watch dog had to be vicious, courageous, watchful and was to bark as soon as it noticed any unusual activity in its vicinity.
- 7. Every line border zastava in the USSR was assigned one trailing dog. Sometimes in distant and important zastavy there were two trailing dogs (and two instructors). In addition to trailing dogs, each line zastava had two or three duty dogs and one or perhaps no watchdog. Being the worst group of service dogs, the watchdogs were not favored by Border-Troop personnel and there was a constant effort to get rid of them for a duty dog with higher qualifications.

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8. [] several ways to get a trailing dog off the trail:

- a. To deposit in one's tracks strong spices or strong-smelling liquids such as black pepper, snuff, makhorka, carbolic acid, lysol, creolin, or crude petroleum.
- b. To enter a stream and to follow it for several hundred meters; to get out on the other bank and to repeat this procedure several times, in this way confusing the dog on the trail.
- c. To avoid leaving human traces on sections of the trail by riding on the backs of animals (horses, donkeys, cows, etc.).
- d. To cover some sections of the trail by riding on the back of another person who eventually turns back. Although theoretically it was possible for the trailing dog to follow the second trail, when and if it was discovered, this was achieved very seldom since by the time the second trail was discovered the searching parties would probably have destroyed it.
- e. To discard on the trail from time to time some personal or other item with some specific, different smells, in order to confuse the dog.
- f. To cover a part of the trail by walking on stilts. By the time the continuation of human traces would be discovered, too many other traces would usually have been made by searching parties and the dog would be confused.
- g. And finally, to effect the crossing in very hot weather. It was established that in hot weather the best trailing dog could not follow traces for more than five to seven kilometers. Best of all, of course, was to cross the border line before a rain which would destroy the specific smells, although the traces in some places would remain even after the rain.

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